1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
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Any man who has been specially blessed with war powers may go on the warpath. Such a man must not merely be blessed with those general war powers that individuals obtain during their puberty fast, but must likewise be blessed with a definite enemy to kill or capture, as the case may be, immediately before he starts out. In practice this meant that whenever a person wished to go on the warpath he fasted in order to obtain the necessary guarantees of success. An account of the powers granted by the spirit or spirits was then placed before the chief and if, in his opinion, they justified the undertaking, the man was permitted to go. If they were insufficient the chief expressed his disapproval and the contemplated undertaking had either to be given up or the man would be compelled to fast again for increased powers. There were a number of men who were unable to obtain the requisite powers. To them one of two alternatives was left open: they might either purchase sufficient powers to go on a warpath or they might volunteer to join a large warpath. A volunteer needed no special blessing. If he had one, it would certainly benefit him, but it was not necessary except as an additional precaution, for the leader of the war party (*dotcᵊhuŋka*) was supposed to be blessed specifically with every element necessary for a successful undertaking. As the Winnebago express it, he was blessed "with a complete road." In a war leader's blessing, everything must be provided—sufficient food, a definite number of enemies to kill, the exact place where they are to be killed, the exact time when they are to be killed, the exact manner in which they are to be killed, the exact manner in which the participants are to return to their homes, the safe return of all participants, and an infinite number of other minor points. As a volunteer went at the request of another man, the latter, and not he, took upon himself entire responsibility and the chief dealt directly with him. The chief would, in such a case, be particularly careful to see that every life that was risked was amply safeguarded. Otherwise the war party would not be permitted to start. [787]

A man may go on the warpath for two reasons: either to revenge a slain relative or in a general way because he thinks he has received sufficient power and wishes to obtain glory. If the incentive was revenge, he might pursue one of two methods. He might go to the shaman with offerings of tobacco and presents and tell him about the death of his relative and his desire for revenge; or he might take the matter in his own hand, fast, and after having stealthily prepared for the necessities of the warpath inform a friend and steal out with him in the middle of the night. Were he to take the first method, it would be the shaman who would fast and who would afterwards lead the party, taking along with him as many men as would follow him. 721 [628]

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72.7 etc. Then the war leader would secretly tell some one to select a stake (for the Victory Dance) and after a short time all the members of the war party would rush in and march around the entire village striking the scalps that they had tied to sticks. Then they would all go to the place where the stake had been put up and there they would distribute the war prizes to the sisters of the men who had won them and the women would walk around proudly with the prizes around their necks. Then, in the daytime they would dance the Victory Dance and in the evening they would dance the Hok'ixere Dance for four nights.

[115] *Description of a war party.*—Informant, member of the Thunderbird clan.

[787] If a man wishes to go on the warpath he must fast and be blessed by the spirits in a specific manner. If a man is thus blessed, he gives a feast and announces his intention of leading a war party. The chief always has a representative at such a feast (a member of the Buffalo clan), and as soon as it is over this man goes to the former and reports to him. If the chief thinks that the blessing is insufficient and might cause the death [622] of many men he takes the war leader's pipe and lays it across his path and the war leader is then compelled to abandon his undertaking. This action on the part of the chief is sacred and must be accepted as final. The war leader dare not step across the pipe. Should the chief, however, not do this, then the war leader knew that there was no objection. Usually some members of every clan go along, but especially members of the Thunderbird, Warrior, and Bear clans.

The action of the war leader is controlled by many rules. He must be the one who has fasted and been blessed with all that is essential for conducting a war party. He must have his food provided for him by the spirits, know the exact location of the enemy, their numbers, and their sex.

726 701 After the war party has traveled for about four days, the men offer tobacco to the leader and he tells them where he is going, the number of the enemy, etc. If, after that, any of the members of the war party do not approve of the undertaking then they place a pipe across his path and the war leader is compelled to return. If nothing is said, then all is well. The war leader always goes ahead of his party and his attendants behind him, followed by the other members of the party. Whenever the chief stops his attendants run to his side, take his war bundle and place it in front of him. Then the leader sits down, neither turning to the right nor to the left but looking straight ahead. The attendants get two poles and place them on each side of him, bend the ends over to form an arch, on each side of which are placed small oak sticks arranged in a row. Under this structure the war leader stays. Here he sleeps and is [614] fed by his attendants. No one is permitted to go ahead of this improvised structure. On each side of him two fireplaces are placed, two for the Upper clans and two for the Lower clans. If the war party is traveling westward the two fireplaces on the north side belong to the Lower clans and the two on the south side to the Upper clans. If a man is going on a warpath for the first time, he stays in the rear of the party and has a little fire of his own. He remains in the rear in this way until the battle begins. Then he joins the others.

A member of the Warrior clan is selected by the war leader to act as guard and he goes back and forth behind him encouraging the men and telling them not to steal away alone or go too far ahead of the party, since that always results in the loss of life. It is for this reason that it is not considered correct for a man to try and steal away and perhaps obtain a war honor in this selfish manner. Whenever the war leader stops he tells his companions what they must do in order to obtain food, all this information having been provided for in his blessing. If he tells some one to go to a certain place and kill a deer, he is certain to find a deer at the place specified. Whenever the war leader gets up and steps over his war bundle the attendants come and place his war [782] bundle on his back and he then proceeds on his march, followed by the other members of the party. Whenever he comes to a river he takes some of the tobacco which is

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always kept on hand and offers it to the spirit who controls this particular war party. The others do the same. Then he would cross the river. Whenever he drank any water the others would also do so, and if he refrained so would the others. If at any time during the night when they are encamping the war leader should wake up and sing some songs, be they grizzly bear, black rust paint, or night songs, all those others who know similar songs would likewise begin to sing.

Miscellaneous war customs. There were, in former times, many miscellaneous customs connected with warfare, most of which have now been forgotten. However, in myths and accounts of war parties a number of them are still mentioned.

When a war party surprised a lodge, all the occupants were killed or captured and the poles that were spliced together to form the arches were released so that they sprang back to either side and assumed a vertical position.

When a war party surprised a lodge in which there were children they generally killed them, cut off their heads, pried open their mouths so as to give them the appearance of laughing, and then placed the heads on their bodies again and arranged them against the door, so that when their father came home he would find them greeting him as usual. A brave warrior would never flinch at such a sight, but would prepare a meal as usual and speak to the children as if they were alive and offer them something to eat. Only then would he bury them. Immediately after they had been buried he would go on the warpath to revenge them.

Frequently the skulls of slain enemies are used as lodge weights and their skin is taken off and used as mats, door-flaps, etc.

War honors.—"It is the ideal of every Winnebago youth," says an informant, "to kill an enemy in full sight of his friends and thus to gain for himself a headdress and an eagle feather." Most deeds considered valorous, according to Winnebago ideas, have associated with them certain insignia which are always worn in public, giving evidence to all that so-and-so has performed such and such a valorous deed.

These insignia consist of the following:

Headdress and feather.—Denote that an individual has scalped and killed a man and torn off his scalp still bleeding. He is entitled to a red headdress and eagle feather. This also includes the man who has counted first coup (*xarishgwahi'na*).

Red headdress.—If he has killed the enemy and not scalped him (*teak'ate wak'e'rē*.)

Eagle feather.—Worn by one who has counted second coup.

Hanging eagle feather.—Worn by one who has counted third coup.

Eagle feather stuck crosswise in hair.—Worn by one who has counted fourth coup.

Waxpirugaje.—Consists of a rope worn around the neck. It is worn by the leader of that warpath who has captured an enemy.

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the warpath.[1] So they say. If you do not become an individual warranted to lead a war party, yet mistaking yourself for one although really an ordinary warrior, you "throw away a man," your act will be considered most disgraceful. A mourner might harm you in revenge for the fact that you have caused him to mourn, and burn you with embers. Your people will all be sad, both on account of your disgrace and on account of the pain inflicted upon you.

My son, not with the blessing of one of the spirits merely, nor with the blessing of twenty, for that matter, can you go on the warpath. You must have the blessing of all the spirits above the earth, and of all those on the earth, and of all those who are pierced through the earth;[2] of all those under the earth; of all those who are under the water; of all those that are on the sides of the earth, i. e., all the four winds; of the Disease-giver;[3] of the Sun; of the Daylight;[4] of the Moon; of the Earth; and of all those who are in control of war powers—with the blessings of all these deities must you be provided before you can lead a successful war party.

My son, if you cast off dress[5] men will be benefited by your deeds. You will be an aid to all your people. If your people honor you, it will be good. And they will like you even the more if you obtain a

[1] Among the Winnebago any individual who has been blessed with the necessary powers to lead a warpath may do so, but it is absolutely essential that his blessing divesting him be of such a nature that every possible contingency is included therein. Such complete blessings are, of course, not common nor can they be obtained except through unusual exertions. If you are blessed with just the ordinary or incomplete war powers and you nevertheless undertake to lead a war party, you may either be defeated or perhaps only partially successful, and, what is worse, you may lose some of the warriors who started with you. Your recklessness has thus caused the death of some of your fellow tribesmen. It is understood that every warrior before starting on the warpath turn his "blessing" over to the chief of the tribe for examination, and if the chief considers it complete the warrior is not held responsible for the lack of success or loss of life. If the chief does not consider an individual's blessing sufficient to justify the object he has in view and forbids the warrior to go, and if the latter nevertheless goes, or granted the case he does not even submit his "blessing" to the chief for scrutiny, and sneaks out, then he is held directly responsible for any mishap on the warpath. The relatives of any individual thus killed may hold the war leader responsible and demand compensation; or, as is indicated by 11. a few lines later, a mourner (i. e., one who has been placed in mourning by the criminal foolhardiness of the war leader) might attack, perhaps kill him, without being held guilty of any crime. It must of course be understood that such occurrences would seldom take place. We must, however, remember throughout these "teachings" that one of the objects of the old men was to draw the most alluring pictures of the rewards that would fall to the lot of those who followed in the footsteps of their ancestors, and, on the other hand, to draw the most lurid pictures of the wretchedness that befell those who deviated, no matter in what details, from the customs sanctioned by age.

[2] According to the Winnebago creation myth, when Earthmaker, the creator of the earth, first came to consciousness and began creating life the earth on which we were to live was in continual motion, and nothing that the former could do seemed to be able to stop it. From above he threw down grass, trees, etc., but all was of no avail. Finally he hit upon the happy expedient of pinning the earth down at the four corners by means of four enormous snakes, or, as some say, by means of four mythical animals known as water spirits. It is to these that the old man is referring here. According to the story, even these were of no avail, and it was only when he finally placed four mythical beings known as "Island Weights" at the four corners that our planet stopped spinning. These "Island Weights" seem to be identical with the spirits of the four cardinal points, but they are not to be confused with the four winds mentioned later.

[3] A deity conceived of as dealing out life-giving powers from one half of his body and death-giving powers from the other half. He is also supposed to disseminate disease. Disease-giver is a literal translation of the Winnebago word, but this probably does not convey the exact meaning. There seems to be no parallel to this peculiar deity among the other Siouan tribes or among the Algonquins.

[4] Daylight or light is conceived of as something different and distinct from the sun.

[5] That is, if you give away things frequently, especially to poor people.

3:Michelson E-4 (no date)1935

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In each village, the two civil chiefs, appoint all the officers, deemed necessary, civil and military, who obey them implicitly. There are two ways of arriving at these high stations, by birth and by election. When the father dies, if he has a son, who has arrived at the age of manhood, and who bids fair to make a good chief—that is, if he possesses a good form, has good bodily powers and mental faculties—is brave, sedate, wise and prudent, he generally succeeds his father in the government, on his father's demise. If the chief, at his death, leave no son who is qualified for the high office of chief, but wills it to some other person, he succeeds to the government. If the chief has no son at his death, it is commonly the case, that his brother's son succeeds him. The line of succession may run out for want of a lawful heir, which is always supplied by an election. It may be changed too, where the heir is unqualified for the station. Great deference is always paid to the will of the dying chief, but every such case is always laid before a full national council, whose decision is final (p. 97).

A chief may be degraded from his rank for bad conduct. . . .

There is in every tribe, what answers to a standing army among us. The profession of arms holds out, to the great mass of the common people, the only road to the temple of fame. . . . The young man, who aspires to the honorable distinction of a "brave" or warrior, must exhibit such traits of character, as are deemed necessary for a soldier to possess, before he can be admitted into the army. When admitted, he wears on his head just as many feathers of the bald eagle, as he has slain human beings, and the size of the feathers indicate the size of his victims. . . . If the warrior has taken a captive, he has a human hand as large as life, painted either on his face, or on some part of his body, or on his blanket, some individuals have several such hands painted upon them (p. 98).[1]

At the head of the army, belonging to each tribe, there is a person who occupies the same station as a General does with us, and he appoints all the inferior officers. The chiefs when met in council, call into it, their warriors, with whom they consult, but frequently they are called to receive the orders, which are obeyed to the letter. This council call before them, persons who are interested in the trial . . . (pp. 98, 99).

If the Senate of the United States is the mildest, the most patriotic and wisest legislative assembly in the civilized world, as it truly is, the Winnebago council, is decidedly at the head of the savage world. . . . The great body of the people have very little influence, almost none, with this council, and they never appear before it unless they are summoned to attend it.—They have no voice in electing the chiefs and in fact no political influence. The civil chiefs and the chief warriors, have in their hands, the whole government of the community, and they govern as they please. Disobedience to the orders of the rulers is punished with death, though, like the British nation, the Indians are not savages enough to cut the traitor into quarters after hanging him until he is dead (pp. 99, 100).

The female part of it, exercised the same influence among the women, that the chiefs did among the men, and the presents they expected from us, had to be better, than those given to the common people. The daughter of a chief, never mar-

[1] Quite different from the data given by Radin, The Winnebago Tribe, pp. 161, 162.

Crashing Thunder

Now all this it would be well for you to obtain. Try to
701 159 867 787 [686] [620] 159 867 776 787 787 159 867 [035] [554]
be a leader of men. To become one, however, is very difficult, the old people used to say. It may happen that you merely pretend to be a leader of men, that you are but a mere warrior in the ranks and yet take it upon yourself to lead a war-party and thus cause a needless waste of life, that you do what is called "throwing away a life." That is the most shameful of all acts. The relatives of the person whom you have thus sacrificed would then have the right to make you suffer, to torture you with burning embers. And then your relatives would have to stand by, sad and humiliated. Not with the blessing of one, not with the blessings of twenty spirits, can you go on the warpath. For that the blessings of all the spirits are necessary—those on this earth, those under it and those who lie pinned through it, the Island Weights; those in the waters and those on the side of the earth, the winds, all four of them. You need the blessings of the spirit who dispenses life from one side of his body and death from the other, the blessings of the Sun, the Moon, the Daylight, and the Earth. All these Earthmaker has made controllers of war and by all these must you be blessed in order to lead a war-party.

My son, if you cast off your dress for many people, that is, if you give to the needy, your people will be benefited by your deeds. It is good thus to be honored by many people. And even more will they honor you if you return victorious from the warpath with one of the four limbs, that is, one of the four war honors. But if you obtain two, or three, or perhaps even four limbs, then all the greater will be the honor. Then whenever a war feast is given you will receive part of the deer that is boiled, either part of its body or part of the head.[10] When on some other occasion,

[10] The meat of a deer at such a feast is given only to great warriors. The head is regarded as the choicest piece.

7: Radin E-5 (ca. 1912) 1926 NP12 Winnebago NP12

to obtain war honors, so that we can wear head ornaments." So did we both speak to each other. We both liked the idea, and so we decided to go in search of war honors. We decided to kill a man of another tribe; we meant to perform an act of bravery. We started out finally. There were four of us, and we went to a place where other tribesmen congregated. We took the train and carried some baggage with us. We took ropes along, for we intended to steal some horses, and if we found the opportunity, kill a man. Horse stealing was regarded as a praiseworthy feat, and I had always admired the people who recounted the number of times they had stolen horses, at one of the Warrior Dances. That was why I wished to do these things.

We proceeded to a place where horses of other tribes used to pasture. Just as we got there we saw the owner of some of these horses and killed him. My friend killed him. Then we went home, and secretly I told my father all about it. I said to him, "Father, you said it was good to be a warrior and you encouraged me to fast and I did so. You encouraged me to give feasts and I did so. Now we have just returned from a trip. We were looking for war honors and the young people who were accompanying me decided that I should lead them. I told them that it was a difficult thing to lead warriors, my father had always told me, and that I had always been given to understand that a person could lead a war-party only in consequence of a specific blessing received from the spirits. I was not conscious of having received any such, I told him.

7:Radin E-8 (ca.1912) 1926 NP12 Winnebago NP12

*159 Thus I spoke. However, they made me an offering
921 of tobacco as they asked me, and I accepted the to-
[701] bacco saying that I would at least make an offering
[781] of tobacco for them. Then I offered tobacco to the
[1076] Thunderbirds and asked them for rain, that we might
walk in the protection and power of rain. This of-
fering we made in the morning and it rained all that
day. Then we went to the place where we knew that
we could find horses. When we got there we met the
owner of the horses and spoke to him. We accompa-
nied him to a carpenter shop nearby, and there killed
him. I struck his dead body, counted coup[**] first,
[555] and announced my new name, as I gave a war-whoop.
[551] I shouted *'Big-Winnebago* has counted coup on his
man.' Then the others counted coup also. We
searched his pockets and found medicine and money
[129] in them. The money we divided among ourselves.
After that we cut out his heart, for we had heard that
[826] hearts were used for medicine. That is why we cut
out his heart. He had a gun and that we took away
from him and hid."

Then my father said to me, "My son, it is good. Your life is no longer an effeminate one. This is the manner in which our ancestors encouraged us to live. It is the will of the spirits in control of war that has led

[**] The first four war honors enumerated above are called "counting coup" by the Whites. *Coup* is the French for *strike* and the expression owes its origin to the custom of warriors counting the number of people they have killed or honors they have obtained by striking the post at the grave of the particular person for whose benefit they are recounting their achievements.
[555]